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LITERACY AND CRIME

IN

MASSACHUSETTS,

AND

THE NECESSITY FOR

MORAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

IN THE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY

GEORGE R. STETSON.

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LITERACY AND CRIME IN MASSACHUSETTS.

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"There can be no doubt that a people are not really advancing, if, on the one hand, their increasing ability is accompanied by increasing vice, or if, on the other hand, while they are becoming more virtuous, they become more ignorant."—BUCKLE'S HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION, vol. i., p. 125.

When we read of the great illiteracy existing in the United States, and especially in that portion of them where the negro, the great factor in illiteracy and crime, abounds; or when we compare the high rank of Massachusetts in literacy with that of other States of New England, we are too much inclined to wrap our Pharisaic cloak about us and to silently breathe the Pharisee's prayer.

Our high rank in literacy may be a matter for self-congratulation to those whose horizon is narrowed by self-complacency and indifference, — who, like the London cockney, go down in the night to look at the sea with a lantern, and declare that they have beheld that great ocean which bears upon its bosom the commerce of a world; but to the honest citizen, to the respecter of law and lover of order, to those who look with pride to a noble, honest and stalwart New England ancestry, it is not a matter for congratulation that the high rank in literacy in this commonwealth is accompanied by a great decadence in public morals and an increase in intemperance and crime in great disproportion to the increase of population.

It is our belief that this decline of private and public morality in the State and in the nation is due in a great measure to the neglect of moral and industrial teaching; and it is the purpose of this paper to ascertain, if possible, the relation of this neglect to the decline of public virtue and the increase of crime.

The *tu quoque* argument so frequently employed by the zealous defenders of our present system of public instruction is an extremely dangerous one; it is the stronghold of the

careless, the indifferent, and the self-sufficient, who, refusing to recognize existing evils, discourage any honest criticism with the demand to "show us a better system," and who supplement the demand with a long array of statistics to show how much better, more moral and highly cultivated we are than our neighbors. The tendency of such egoistic opinions is to the extinction of public morality and popular education; for we, in declining to do our present duty, have but the grim satisfaction left to us of following our neighbors, at a distance, on the path of declining literacy and morality to whatever depths it may lead.

It is an empty honor to run in a race in which all are losers, and, as regards our neighbors, such is the position of our State to-day; and what honor, or satisfaction, or advantage is it to ourselves, may we ask, if the degree of illiteracy, immorality and crime be ten times greater in Georgia or Virginia than in Massachusetts, if in a period of thirty years our own immorality and crime has doubled? Instead of this pharisaic and defiant attitude, let us rather approach the subject in a spirit of inquiry and humility, and with a determination to ascertain, if possible, the cause of our decadence in public and private virtue, and, having found it, to apply the remedy.

We have asserted positively that there is a decadence of morality and an increase of crime in this commonwealth; smarting under such a charge, the appeal will very naturally be made for statistics to sustain it; unfortunately they are abundant, and may be found in the United States census returns, the reports of commissioners of prisons in Massachusetts, the returns of libels of divorce, and reports of the Bureau of Statistics, and other official publications.

We preface our examination of them with the remark, that we do not criticise Massachusetts from the standpoint of the Virginian, who, relying upon a comparison of the numbers of our dependent and defective classes with his own, attempts to prove our system of public instruction powerless in sup-

pressing those classes; since, for the purpose of comparison with other States, our statistics are valueless, owing to the different basis upon which they are founded; but, rather, we shall endeavor to show our moral decadence by the records of crime within the State, and more especially by our own observation and common experience, — requesting it to be borne in mind that the design of this paper does not include any inquiry into the relative moral progress of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, at home or abroad. We are well aware that in those periods great progress was made, and that the tide of progress, at times receding, and now and then checked by counter-currents, has generally advanced. Our present inquiry is directed solely to the period already mentioned; our purpose being, if our moral decadence is shown, to ascertain if possible where the responsibility for it rests, with the intention of building up, rather than pulling down, of amending what is wrong, and correcting what is erroneous, if such can be determined; the trend of our appeal not being against popular secular education or a correct system of public instruction, but in favor of whatever additional instruction may be found to be necessary to correct existing evils.

In the use of statistics to prove the increase of crime in our State, the fairest method seems to be to take the two extremes of the period from 1850 to 1880.

It will no doubt be found on examination that the moral history of this period is, to a degree, an epitome of that of other periods; and what is true of the larger periods is true of this, with the important exception that for the whole term under review we have scored no onward progress, and under the existing conditions such progress is apparently impossible.

We have already suggested an increase of drunkenness and crime in this State in great disproportion to the increase of population; by the United States census returns for 1850 we find that the total population of Massachusetts was 994,514,

and the number in prison 1236, or 1 prisoner to 804+ of the population; and in 1880, with a population of 1,783,085, there were in prisons 3659, or 1 prisoner to 487+ of the population; in other words, our prison population, in proportion to the whole population, has nearly doubled in thirty years.

It is to be objected that this statement does not show the actual amount of crime for which our own institutions are responsible, owing to the great number of idle, ignorant and vicious immigrants landed upon our shores; we answer, that the examination of the statistics of our native prisoners, from which, of course, the foreign element is entirely excluded, will show that their number, when compared with the whole native population, has increased from 1 in 1267+ in 1850 to 1 in 615+ in 1880, as can be ascertained by the following table compiled from the United States census: —

	Total Population.	Native Population.	Number in Prisons.	Number of Native Prisoners.	Proportion of Native Prisoners to Native Population.
1850	994,514	827,430	1,236	653	1 in 1,267+
1880	1,783,085	1,339,594	3,659	2,175	1 in 615+

Stated in another form, our native criminal population has more than doubled in thirty years, notwithstanding our system of public instruction, our churches, our schools, our charitable institutions, and all the educational efforts and appliances known to modern civilization.

In addition, we find by the same table that, in 1850, over one half, and in 1880, nearly two thirds, of the total number of the prison population were natives.

As convincing as these statistics of our retrogradation seem, they are thrown into obscurity by the really appalling fact which appears in the report of the Prison Commissioners for Massachusetts in 1884, page 126, namely, that the entire number of arrests for crime for the year ending September 30, 1883, was 65,000, or one arrest for every 29+ of the

inhabitants of this commonwealth; and assuming that five persons constitute a family, we have the alarming result of one arrest to every six families in the entire state.

If the statistics of Massachusetts are examined more in detail, we find that the criminal population of the House of Correction of the county of Hampden has increased from 363 in 1863, to 1,131 in 1883, — an increase in twenty years of 312 per cent.,— while the population has increased but 100+ per cent., — a ratio of increase in crime to the population of 3 to 1. In the five years ending September, 1883, the increase in the number committed was 96 per cent. The sheriff despondingly adds: "It will, therefore, be seen that our criminal population has increased in much larger ratio than the population of the county, and this condition will probably continue." [1]

Counties.	Population.	Average Number of Prisoners.	Proportion of Prisoners to Population.
Barnstable	31,945	7	1 in 4,563+
Berkshire	69,049	83	1 in 831+
Bristol	139,121	212	1 in 656+
Dukes	4,305	1	1 in 4,305
Essex	244,640	339	1 in 721+
Franklin	36,000	22	1 in 1,636+
Hampden	104,117	133	1 in 782+
Hampshire	47,235	39	1 in 1,211+
Middlesex	317,951	390	1 in 815+
Nantucket	3,726	—[2]	1 in —[2]
Norfolk	96,462	73	1 in 1,321+
Plymouth	74,024	44	1 in 1,682+
Suffolk	387,626	1,336	1 in 290+
Worcester	226,885	236	1 in 961+
	1,783,086	2,915	1 in 611+

In September, 1882, the percentage of increase of the prison population of Bristol County was 19+ per cent; of Suffolk County, 8+ per cent; while Nantucket and Dukes Counties had an average of less than one prisoner each.

[1] *Thirteenth Annual Report of Commissioners of Prisons*, p. 13.

[2] Less than one prisoner.

The table on p. 5, from the Prison Commissioners' Report for 1884, shows the average number of prisoners in each county, and the proportion of prisoners to the population, for the year ending September 30, 1883.

The proportion of prisoners to the population of the State is seen to be one in 611+, which is a slight increase over that of 1882; the number of commitments to the several prisons and reformatories in 1883 is, however, 1,260 greater than in 1882,[1] an increase of 5.50 per cent., while the average increase in population is but 2.23 per cent., a ratio of increase considerably more than double, — the increase being chiefly in commitments for drunkenness, tramps, and vagabondage.

To get a clearer comprehension of the great increase among us of these offenses against public order and decency, it is necessary to enlarge our field of observation; and looking back to 1879, we find in that year 12,723 offenses of this character, while in 1883 there were 20,095; an increase in five years of 57+ per cent., our increase in population the same term being but 12 per cent., showing an excess of 45 per cent. in the percentage of the increase of crime over that of population; further, if we examine the statistics of these five years in detail, we shall find in the year 1882 an increase in the commitments to all prisons, for drunkenness, over 1881, of 5,958, or more than 57 per cent., the average increase in population being but 2.23 per cent.; and in the year 1883 an increase of 1,101 commitments over 1882, or 6+ per cent.

In tracing the supposed relation of this increase of crime to the neglect of public and private moral instruction, and to incomplete education in our State, it may still be objected that these statistics include a large foreign element which has never come under the influence of our system of public instruction, and for which it is not justly responsible; in answer, we have already shown by official statistics that our native

[1] *Prison Commissioners' Report*, 1884, p. 60.

prison population had more than doubled in thirty years from 1850 to 1880; but if this answer is not sufficient, we have still left to us the returns of libels for divorce, — a class of statistics from which the foreign element and a large class of our native population is eliminated, owing to its membership in a church which forbids divorce from the bonds of matrimony.

An examination of these returns reveals the startling fact that the ratio of divorced persons to the population of Massachusetts has increased from 1 in 3,134, in 1863, to 1 in 1,537, in 1880; and that while the population in those years has increased but 37+ per cent., the ratio of divorced persons to the population has increased 104+ per cent.; again, during the period from 1863 to 1882, the ratio of increase of divorces, marriages and population in this State was: of divorces, 147.6—; of marriages, 62.6; of population, 43+;[1] and for the ten years from 1873 to 1882, the ratio of increase of divorces was 14.7; of marriages, 7.6; of population, 19+; showing that the number of divorced persons has more than doubled in the first period mentioned, and in the second period, that divorces had increased more than twice as rapidly as marriages, or in the ratio of 2.35 to 1, and as regards the population in the ratio of 3.44 to 1.

If we inquire into the causes of divorce, we find that in the 20 years from 1863 to 1882, 79 per cent. were for adultery and desertion, and that in 1882 the average length of married life of all the libellants was but 10.95 years.

Of the increase of crimes against chastity, Mr. Dyke remarks: "The old plea that easy divorce keeps in check various forms of unchastity is discredited by such statistics as we have. For in Massachusetts, where the convictions of crime for twenty years have been carefully reported, it is found that convictions for the various crimes against chastity greatly increased in nearly all parts of the State with two exceptions. And these exceptions of two crimes in the city

[1] *Report of Libels for Divorce*, 1883, p. 139.

of Boston, when examined, were found to prove the general rule. The increase far outstripped that of any other class of crimes, and even of divorces, which more than doubled in this period. It is significant that while the foreign-born population in Suffolk County (Boston) were charged with 39 per cent. of all crimes, aside from crimes against liquor laws, only 34 per cent. of the crimes against chastity could be laid at their door." [1]

Of the increase of divorces he further says: "It is safe to say that divorces have doubled in proportion to marriages or population in most of the Northern States within thirty years. Present figures indicate a still greater increase.[2] The divorce rate is generally high in New England and where her people have gone in the West." [3]

"The increase of divorces during the past thirty years is an ominous symptom," says Dr. Dorchester, "and in even the most liberal view of the question can but awaken concern for the permanence of social order and the stability of public virtue." [4]

Of the decrease of the marriage rate and the birth rate in the purely American family, and of the great corresponding increase in crimes against chastity, of illegitimate births and of fœticide, we have no space to treat separately.

Finally, we find the ratio of divorces to marriages in our State to be, in 1863, 1 to 52.5, or one divorce to every fifty-two marriages, and in 1882, 1 to 34.3; while in Vermont, for ten years preceding 1879, it was 1 to 17, in Rhode Island 1 to 14, and in Connecticut 1 to 11.[5] In answer to the objection which may be made, that the great increase of divorces in Massachusetts during a period of twenty years is mainly due to the changes in the laws relating thereto, it may be remarked that these changes can have no effect on the comparative ratios between divorces, marriages, and population;

[1] *Princeton Review*, March, 1884, p. 173.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 170. [3] *Ibid.* p. 180.
[4] *Problem of Religious Progress*, p. 217.
[5] *Report of Libels for Divorce*, 1883, p. 153.

and that the objection is invalid as regards the increase of offenses against chastity.

While these statistics of divorce are not classed with those of crime, yet it will be seen that in many instances they were granted on the ground of offenses against public order and decency, and the libellants do not appear as criminals for the simple reason that the court neglects to take cognizance and pursue the offender as it should do ; and whatever the legal result may be, it is still painfully apparent that a majority of these offenses is directly attributable to a condition of lax morality such as has had, in some quarters, no previous existence in our history, and to an absolute defiance of law, both moral and civil, and of duty to self and to society, which is perhaps a natural result of the prevailing tendency to egoism and to the sacrifice of the interests of the family to those of the individual ; and, — although this is not the place, nor is it necessary, to bring forward the well-worn arguments to show that the family is the very foundation of society, of law, of order, and popular government, — we may remark that upon the purity of the family relation depends not only the welfare of society, but even the prosperity and perpetuity of the nation.

If the increase of crime and the decadence of public morality in our State is not already sufficiently proven, it may be observed that, however forcible and formidable these statistics may appear, they yet fail to show the exact degree of immorality and crime, active or latent, in our community, — a statement, the truth of which is, perhaps, evident without further illustration. If, however, it is doubted, it cannot be better shown than by the statistics already quoted relating to the increase in the number of commitments for drunkenness in 1882 over 1881, — an increase which, on examination, proves to have been caused by a change in the law, which practically increased the fine for that offense to such an extent that the inability of the offenders to pay it resulted in the commitment to prison of 16,297 delinquents, an increase of 5,958 in one year. It will, we think, hardly be asserted that

the habit of drunkenness in these six thousand persons was acquired in one year, and had no existence prior to 1882; it is more probable that the habit in the great majority was an old one, and was brought into public notice solely by an inability to pay the fine and costs, — and, further, it is certain that the number would have been still further increased if all those arrested for drunkenness had been alike unable to pay the costs of court.

On the value of statistics in determining the degree of crime, Mr. F. H. Wines, special agent of the tenth census, remarks: "The bare statement that there were on a given day so many persons in confinement, standing alone, is of value, but its relative value is very slight. The relation between the number of persons incarcerated and the number of convictions had is a variable relation. But if it were not so, there is no necessary relation between the number of convictions had and the number of crimes perpetrated; since crime may be more vigorously prosecuted in one locality than in another, and it may even prove to be least vigorously prosecuted where it is most rampant."

It may also be remarked that neither as regards the libels for divorce could it be truthfully asserted that the number granted represents the actual number of infelicitious marriages or broken vows.

Again, as we have seen, and as the whole world knows, apart from what the statistics of Massachusetts may show, that as mental culture does not include moral culture, it is possible for a high degree of crime and immorality to coexist with a high degree of literacy; and as high mental culture increases our sensibility and self-esteem, it also increases our ability to accumulate wealth, to acquire position, and to escape the consequences of criminal acts; a statement that is sufficiently proven by the character and position of the criminal who in this community ordinarily escapes punishment, when compared with that of the criminal who is caught and suffers; for, as Mr. Wright very truthfully declares, "It is

not, as a rule, the well-educated and mentally active people who fill our asylums, almshouses, and prisons; on the other hand, the residuum of society stocks such institutions;"[1] a statement which forcibly points to the conclusion that only a small portion of the crime and immorality in a mentally cultivated community finds punishment and appears in the statistics of crime; for, as we all know, the violation of law, civil or moral, is not confined to the poor, the partially educated, and the ignorant.

The fact of the existence of defective and delinquent classes in a community or nation may be no argument against its civilization; but if they are increasing in a much greater ratio than the population, it is very convincing evidence of moral decadence; and if true progress is twofold, — moral and intellectual, — then it will follow that we, as a people, are not advancing.

It will now perhaps be acknowledged that the data above given from official sources point to the fact of an increase of crime in disproportion to the population, and a moral decadence in this commonwealth. It may also be admitted that the failure of statistics to record the actual degree of crime and immorality in the State has been plainly shown.

But clearly and unmistakably as these statistics seem to point to one conclusion, we are ready to abandon them, to cast them aside altogether, and to rest our appeal solely upon the common experience and observation of every member of this community.

In our search for evidence, it will not be necessary to go far, or to probe deep.

If we go to the common laborer and ask him if his fellow-laborer is temperate, sober, and chaste, as regards himself, or just, faithful, and loyal, to others, the answer will not be encouraging.

If we ask the master if his employees have any well-defined convictions of duty either to themselves or to him, any

[1] *Board of Education Reports*, 1882-83, p. 153.

increasing qualifications or capacity in their several tasks, the answer will disappoint us.

If we appeal to the merchant we shall be shocked by his manifest loss of confidence and weakening faith in his fellow-merchant. If we ask the reason, he will recite to us his long experience of fraud, of double-dealing, of thefts, of defalcations, of robberies, of breaches of trust, and of hundreds of legally-unpunishable offences against mercantile honor, until his faith in the truth, the justice and fidelity of his neighbor, while not absolutely lost, is so shaken as to be of greatly diminished value in his dealings.

The great majority is, no doubt, still honest and temperate, but our confidence is somewhat shaken by the fact, already mentioned, that one in every thirty of our fellow-citizens, or one member of every sixth family in the State, was arrested for crime during the past official year; and to act upon the belief of the "leading banker" — quoted by Dr. Dorchester as saying, "I would be willing to take the men up from the street as we meet them, and put them in charge of the vault, saying, 'This vault is open; you watch it for an hour,' and not one in a hundred would disappoint that confidence" [1] — would be extremely hazardous, if not foolhardy.

An appeal to the bankers or to the managers of great corporations will result, if possible, in still greater disappointment. We shall hear of vast conspiracies entered into to defraud whole communities, of corporations organized for the express purpose of defrauding the innocent and unwary, of the prostituting of high public office to personal gain, of the appropriation of public funds to personal uses, of the misapplication of sacred trusts, of the fraudulent issue of commercial obligations, of gambling with the capital of banks by persons high in public esteem and in social position, — offenses which have become an almost daily occurrence.

Indeed, so numerous and so frequent are they that the

[1] Dorchester's *Problem of Religious Progress.*

heart of commerce, public faith, and confidence is nearly paralyzed.

Again, if we look at our public press, we find it pandering to a vulgar, prurient curiosity in disgusting details of crimes against public order and decency, and in matters purely private and personal, to satisfy a great public craving; and the journal which is the most minute and particular in these details is the most financially successful, a depraved public taste demanding that it shall do its bidding if it wants its patronage.

If we turn to literature and to our public libraries, we find that the books of the least value have the greatest circulation and success, and that in the theatre the prevailing public taste is reflected. The pastors of our churches will testify that the great majority neglects their ministrations; "that under the voluntary system of support, religious bodies multiply and crowd each other until many a little township has from six to ten churches, with almost half its population living in utter neglect of all. In many of these churches nothing is heard or seen from one year's end to another's that is not an emphasis of the individual;"[1] that a large number of the regular attendants upon these services go to church in search of amusement or intellectual gratification, and not for worship or instruction; and that generally the success of a minister depends not so much upon his faithful discharge of his duties, personal and spiritual, as upon his ability to amuse, to furnish a pleasing variety of topics, and to gratify the intellect.

In short, so far as our observation extends, and whichever way we turn, we find positive indications of an existing and increasing laxity in public and private morals, of the weakening of the moral sense, and the decline in habits of virtue.

If, then, these are truths, it is evident that our standard of public morality is lowered, and that no further confirmation is required of statistics; and as there can be no doubt that

[1] Rev. Samuel Dyke, *Princeton Review*, March, 1884, p. 182.

the loss of faith and confidence in ourselves must follow the loss of confidence in others, all our habits, personal, political and social, will be insensibly accommodated to the altered condition of society, and the difficulty of leading a pure and honorable life thus increased by the retroactive effect of a condition of lax morality.

GEORGE R. STETSON.

BOSTON, MASS.

THE NECESSITY FOR MORAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

[From THE ANDOVER REVIEW, October, 1886.]

IN a former number of this "Review,"[1] in a paper entitled "Literacy and Crime in Massachusetts," the increase of the defective and delinquent classes is a much greater ratio than the increase of population was conclusively shown.

"There are," observes Mr. Mill, "but two roads by which truth can be discovered: observation and reasoning." In the present instance they unite in leading us to the unwelcome conclusion that for a generation, at least, the decadence of public morality in Massachusetts has been constant and positive.

The question that forces itself upon all thinking men who have the welfare and reputation of the State at heart is, What is the probable cause of this decline in public morals?

In the paper referred to, I stated my belief to be that this increase of crime is due in a great degree to the neglect or abandonment of moral and industrial teaching in the family and in the school. A perfect system of public instruction must include moral, intellectual, physical, and industrial education, each part being essential to the perfect whole; and as its object is to prepare the pupil for "complete living," it follows that the only practical test of our educational work is in the character of its results in the individual, and collectively upon society.

Our Pilgrim and Puritan fathers had the intuition that a government by the people and for the people could neither be maintained or perpetuated by any course of instruction which cultivated the intellect and neglected the moral and civic duties and industrial employments, — which, in other words, educated the head at the expense of the heart and the hands.

[1] December, 1884.

Each individual in that primitive commonwealth felt his personal responsibility to God and to his neighbor. Personal success and aggrandizement were held secondary to the public welfare, and each member of the community felt conscientiously bound to do, and to be, his utmost, as an important part of that whole which was but a sum of the parts. This was the altruistic period of our commonwealth; "and," remarks Mr. Lunt, "although there are inevitable points of difference between the condition of our ancestors and our own, no salutary advancement can be made in whatever constitutes the substantial welfare of life without the better personal qualities which they exhibited, without the honest motives which prompted their conduct, without the bearing which they honored, and the virtues which they reverenced." [1]

It was the weight of the responsibility pressing upon these founders of a new Western empire that made them stern, unyielding, and exacting, but honest, fearless, and upright in the discharge of every duty, and enabled them to lay the foundation of a character which was the genesis of public morality and of true patriotism, not only in New England, but throughout the nation. In answer to the caviler against the Puritans and Puritanism of New England, who claims that they were only remarkable for their religious bigotry and despotic intolerance, we remark that while moral perfection, inherent or acquired, is not claimed for them, yet, notwithstanding the vices of the time, which even the austerity of the Puritan character could not entirely resist, the outcome of their religious, moral, civic, and industrial training is alone to be considered, namely, a character whose virtues were as solid and enduring as its faults — resulting from isolation and contamination — were numerous and transitory: the tree is to be judged only by its fruits.

The lesson we derive from this cursory *résumé* of the origin of our typical New England character in the heroic and altru-

[1] *Three Eras of New England*, p. 64.

istic period of our early history is, that, while we can hardly dignify their natural and simple course of instruction — so crude in its details, but so perfect in its results — with the title of "system" excepting for convenience, it was an eminently practical course, which, combining the intellectual, moral, physical, and industrial elements of a perfect education, resulted in the complete adaptation of the individual to the necessities of his existence. It was a "system" in which the parents and the family coöperated with the teacher in each department of his instruction, and practically sustained him in his discipline and government. It was a "system" in which no one faculty was educated at the expense of, or to the exclusion of, another, and its product was a state thoroughly equipped for the battle of life and for complete living. It was a "system" in which the principles of religion, the cardinal virtues, and the moral and civic duties were thoroughly taught, the necessity of industrial education acknowledged, and its practice enforced.

As early as in 1642, we find the Court thus decreeing: "Taking into consideration the great neglect in many parents and masters, in training up their children in learning and labor, and other employments which may be profitable to the Commonwealth, do hereupon order and decree, . . . and for this end they (the officers) shall have power to take account from time to time of their parents and masters, and of their children, concerning their calling and instruction of their children."[1] The Court also provided for the industrial training of the "children of such as shall not be able or fit to employ and bring them up." Two hundred and twenty-five years later, we find this paternal legislation copied by the English Parliament, with the result in a few years, of a very great decrease in juvenile crime.

Compared with this high but rude standard, directly evolved from the necessitous circumstances of the early settlers of New England, it will be seen at once how lamentably deficient

[1] *Records of Mass.*, ii. 8.

our modern systems of public instruction are, in the comprehension of the true function of education; as remarks Mr. Spencer: "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of any educational course is to judge in what degree it discharges such function."[1] It is true that our circumstances have greatly changed; it is equally true that our educational needs remain substantially the same, and while we cannot hope to restore the Puritan methods in their primitive simplicity and effective adaptation of means to the end required (as has been ably advocated by Mr. Hale in his paper entitled "Half Time in Schools"), owing to our greatly altered social conditions and to the almost complete disappearance of the family and family influence in a large proportion of the *clientèle* of our public school system in the large centres of population, we can incorporate into our present system its essentially practical features; so that, instead of "mumbling little else but dead formulas," we may effectively prepare children for the ordinary activities and exigencies of life.

The distinguishing mark of this early Massachusetts school was its religious and moral instruction. Its only text-book was the Bible. And tracing the progress of the decline of this instruction, we find that when in after years it became less prominent in the school, it was continued in the family; the church, however, retaining its hold, and maintaining a constant surveillance, until the schools became secular by law, and then, casting out religion, we cast out morals.

And here, it appears to me, in arbitrarily separating religious instruction from secular instruction, we have, in yielding to the popular sectarian clamor, committed the well-nigh fatal error of classing the positive instruction in morals as sectarian instruction; an error which has resulted in the gradual decline of moral teaching as an important part in the curriculum of the common school.

"In the effort to avoid sectarianism," says one, "the secu-

[1] *Education*, p. 3.

larization of the common schools in the United States has been carried to the extreme."[1]

"Society, in its protest against bigoted ecclesiasticism and clerical control in education," remarks another, "rushes to the other extreme, non-religion; all agree that sound morality must be made the very sub-basis of an educational system."[2]

Jean Paul asserts that moral development is the only education, as the intellectual is instruction; and Mr. Spencer declares this neglect of moral education to be the most glaring defect in our programmes of education, and remarks that this most pressing desideratum "has not been even recognized as a desideratum."

That this error and misfortune of ours is primarily owing to the absence among us of a definite idea of the province of morals and moral teaching there is little doubt; and the poverty of the teaching of practical morals in the majority of our public schools can be best shown by asking any class of children of reasonable age the question, In what does public morality consist; and what duties does it demand? If the question was repeated to the parents of these children, no two of the answers obtained would agree in precision of statement or definiteness of ideas, and the majority would confound moral instruction with sectarian religious instruction as one and the same thing; while to declare that morals are in any degree independent of religions would be to that majority as startling a proposition as to declare the converse, that religions are independent of morals — a mental condition which, of itself, indicates the necessity of moral teaching. It is the common belief that morals are in some way sectarian, notwithstanding the very obvious fact that thousands of our fellow-citizens, although unable precisely to define the province of morals, or to catalogue the moral virtues, are temperate, honest, industrious, just, charitable, virtuous, and loyal

[1] Kiddle & Schems' *Manual of Theory and Practice of Teaching*. New York, 1881.
[2] Baldwin's *Art of School Management*. New York, 1881.

to society and the government, but at the same time are members of no church or sect, and positively unreligious.

An old writer defines morality as the science of duty; the science which teaches the individual his duty to himself and others, and the reason for it.

"It may be said," suggests another, "that moral education deals with the relations which mankind sustain to each other, and religious education with those which man, as a spiritual being, sustains to his Creator." In the history of our own State we find that when religious instruction was abandoned by the state it was continued by the church and the family; when abandoned by the family, it was continued by the church; but, unfortunately, the gradual disintegration and destruction of the family has, naturally enough, resulted in the decline of the demand for moral instruction by the church, and hence the majority of the children of Massachusetts are without that education which contributes in a greater degree than any other to the welfare of the individual and of society.

The intensely practical side of this education must not be overlooked; it comprehends the duties and responsibilities of the individual to himself and to society, — the preservation of health, temperance, honor, honesty; the knowledge of our rights and their equality, of the reciprocal duties, of the duties of the citizen to the state, — obedience to law, justice, chastity, respect for the liberty and reputation of others, for contracts and property; and it properly defines lying and calumny, etc. It is to the neglect or absence of this teaching in the modern family, the frequent scornful rejection of it when offered by the church, and the general abandonment and neglect of positive instruction in our common schools, to which I attribute the present decadence of public morality, and the gradual weakening of the New England character in this commonwealth. It is obvious that no public system can supply the place of such family instruction in morals as our fathers had; domestic education, says Dr. Lieber, can never be supplanted by any general school system. It is, however, apparent that

the increasing disregard and neglect of proper instruction by parents and guardians, "the present decay of faith in God and the worth of life that is the unfailing mark of weakening character and sinking morality," is due in a great measure to the disruption and rapid disintegration of the family, now going on in all our large manufacturing towns, cities and large centres of population, consequent on poverty, the fixed condition of the laboring class, and the entire absence of the altruistic element in our organized industries, making it imperative that society shall in some way protect its purity and life. In our opinion it can be best done by making morals — the science of our duty to ourselves, to others, and to government — an important part of the positive instruction in our common schools.

We perfectly recognize the fact that virtuous habits are insensibly acquired in the ordinary life and discipline of the school; and the more conscientious the teacher, the greater the moral results; but moral education, without which all other is impotent and valueless, has no definite place in the curriculum, and the instruction casually given, or the little, if any, required by the committees, is not at all commensurate with its high importance; it is not demanded by the parents, and the statute (Mass. chap. 44, sec. 15) which so emphatically requires it is practically obsolete.

The reputation of the modern teacher depends alone upon his success in cultivating the intellect — upon the percentage of his pupils — with little or no regard to his ability as a true educator. A recent writer observes: "It is curious to contrast the care and industry with which men cultivate the intellect with their carelessness in the cultivation of moral perfection. No one supposes that intellectual vigor and keenness and delicacy of discrimination will come of themselves, and without discipline and painstaking; but many suppose that the corresponding qualities of the moral life may be left to take their chance."

In the very gradual awakening upon this subject, the tim-

idity with which our public school system is approached is remarkable; it has been raised by fulsome public adulation to such a high position, and surrounded by such a halo of false sentiment, that we enter its presence with hushed voices and faltering steps, forgetting that instead of being our master it is our servant. The product of that system is at present an educational monstrosity; an individual, an egotist, whose intellect is cultivated at the expense of every other faculty and in disregard of the moral education and industrial training absolutely necessary to an honest life and character.

"That which our school courses leave almost entirely out," says Herbert Spencer, "we thus find to be that which most nearly concerns the business of life;" and under our high-pressure system we are putting edge tools into the hands of children without instruction as to their use or purpose, and launching them out upon society conscious only of their *rights*, but not of their *duties;* and entirely unprepared to contribute to the working force of the world, to their own support, or to withstand temptation. As far as school instruction has gone, they are ignorant that society or the civil government has any claim upon them that they are at all bound to recognize or acknowledge.

This subjective tendency of our systems of instruction is now apparent to all close observers; and among those who have spoken of it Mr. Mather, in his report on "Technical Education in the United States," declares,[1] "We must take warning from America; our national system of elementary instruction must not drift to the literary side alone, to the degree that it has done of late in that country."

"Of the knowledge now commonly imparted in educational courses, very little is of any service in guiding man in his conduct as a citizen," says Mr. Spencer.

To ascertain the evil results of this one-sided education we have not to go far; the decline in public morality in Massachusetts since the abandonment of positive moral and religious

[1] Report Royal Commission on Technical Instruction.

instruction in our schools is very marked: juvenile crime has greatly increased.

The Prison Commissioners' Report for the year ending September 30, 1880, shows that there were for that year 17,053 commitments to the prisons of Massachusetts, on sentences, and the Board, from actual statistics covering several thousand cases, estimate that for each one hundred convicts there are forty-five children under fifteen years of age![1]

We learn further, that about forty per cent. of the whole number of county prisoners are not above twenty-five years, and about twenty-five per cent. not above twenty-one years old.[2]

The Commissioners of Prisons of our State make the following statement: —

"There were in the houses of correction on the 30th of September, 1881, 561 male prisoners, having sentences of one year or more; eighty per cent. of these were not above thirty years of age, 140 being between twenty-five and thirty, 180 from twenty-one to twenty-five, and 129 twenty years old or less."[3]

In the report on the State Prison for the same year, we find that of the whole number committed to that prison in twenty-five years, 16 + per cent. were from fifteen to twenty years of age; and in the year 1881, twenty-two per cent., and of the whole number then in prison 34 + per cent. were under twenty-five years.

Upon these and similar facts the Commissioners remark: "The importance of a common school education has not been overestimated; but, with the prisons of Massachusetts filled with men and women the great majority of whom can read and write, it is easy to see that something more than these acquirements is necessary to prevent crime, and to reform criminals. The school therefore should have a broader outlook."

[1] Thirteenth Annual Report B. C. of Prisons, p. 129.
[2] W. E. Spalding, Sec'y Mass. B. C. of Prisons, in *Zion's Herald*, May 17, 1881.
[3] Coms. of Prisons Rept., 1882.

From the unusually accurate statistics of our State, we gather the unwelcome fact, mentioned in a former paper, that our native criminal population (that is, those born in this country of any parentage, but reared under our institutions) has more than doubled in the last thirty years, notwithstanding our vaunted system of public instruction, our churches, our superior schools, our charitable institutions, and all the educational efforts and appliances in use in our modern civilization.

As we have seen, or may see, our statistics also show that the great majority of these prisoners had received a common school education, and could read and write, but before imprisonment were idle, indolent, and without any visible means of support; hence the belief that our system of public instruction tends to the gradual and final extinction of crime, which has by reason of its reiteration and familiarity been accepted as an axiom, is now, by our closer observation and more mature experience and the "inexorable logic" of statistics, proven to be false.

Intelligence alone does not prevent crime; and in this particular our experience is by no means singular. It is stated that there is not an individual of the two millions of Würtemberg, or of the three millions of Saxony, above the age of ten years unable to read and write, but crime still exists. In France, of 100 criminals 61 were illiterate, 37 literate, and 2 had received a superior education; fifty years later 31 were illiterate, 65 literate, and 4 had received a superior education; the report to the International Penitentiary Congress states: "There is reason to believe that in France as in many other countries the insufficiency of our moral education, the general defect of intellectual culture, and the want of an industrial calling leave an open road to crimes and misdemeanors."

In Baden, it is stated that only four per cent. of the state prisoners are unable to read, but fifty per cent. have not learned a trade.

In short, the reports from all the countries represented agree in attributing the cause and increase of crime to the neglect of religious and moral education and industrial training. It may be, then, not a rash or unwarranted statement to make, that intellectual culture, without moral education, rather increases our ability to escape the consequences of criminal acts, but does not prevent their commitment. Professor Sewall very sensibly says: "Indeed, it may be a question whether the effect of mere increased intelligence, without accompanying moral principles, may not be either to invent new forms of dishonesty and vicious practice, or to cover up and ingeniously shield from penalty those crimes which with the more ignorant are not more prevalent, but are only not so cunningly concealed." [1]

It is sometimes objected, and not without reason, that statistics are misleading; their value, of course, depends upon their foundation and method of collection, and upon proper use. The statistics of Massachusetts are the best our country affords, and are generally accepted and relied upon as authoritative; but all statistics, even when collected under the most perfect laws and methods, have their limitations; as obviously, we cannot determine by them the exact degree of immorality, or misery, or vice, existing in the community at any given time, as they cannot reach behind the records of crime.

And all statistics relating to crime, however well founded and collated, must of necessity fail to indicate the full extent of evil, as it is only when the common law is broken that secret vice breaks into crime and we become statistically cognizant of it.[2] If statistics are objected to in this instance, however generally accepted in others, we can safely rely upon the common experience, knowledge, and observation of every thinking member of the community, and especially of parents

[1] *The New Ethics*, p. 40.

[2] "Au-dessous des crimes et des délits enregistrés par la statistique, entrevoir, deviner les demi-crimes, les demi-delits, les infractions à l'usage et les violations impunies de la loi qui pullulent dans les nations en fermentation." — M. Tarde, in *Revue Philosophique*, February, 1886.

and guardians of the young, for evidence of our decline in morality; and it may then be easier, after listening to that experience, to accept the conclusion that the time has arrived when the private effort of the family (where it exists) for moral education shall be supported, encouraged and supplemented, but not supplanted, by public effort in that direction. It is not necessary to dwell upon the absolute necessity of this education to good being and good living. The Mohammedan and the Christian both agree in their estimate of the moral code which is older than either and founded on the Decalogue. To true civilization, the double growth, the moral and intellectual, is indispensable; this double movement, Mr. Buckle asserts, is "essential to the very idea of civilization, and includes the entire theory of mental progress."

We have now come to the practical question, How are morals to be taught in our public schools? I answer that as they are secular, and relate to the practical duties and obligations of life, they can be taught, as other sciences more or less exact are taught, by specially prepared text-books and oral teaching, adapted to the different ages.

Germany has long since answered the question. "La fin de l'instruction primaire est l'éducation morale et religieuse de la nation par le Christianisme," says M. Rendu, in his report upon primary instruction in that country. The schools are jointly under the charge of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Minister of Public Instruction. The schools are Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, in which pupils of different denominations receive the same secular, but different religious instruction. In the elementary schools, taking pupils from six to fourteen, religion and morals stand first in the curriculum.

The Prussian teachers, are, by law, instructed in morals and religion in seminaries for three years.

When, a few years ago, the schools of France were made secular by law, the French educators, with greater quickness

of perception than we have shown of the necessity of the moral education which the church had conducted, at once entered the field with various text-books to supply the anticipated needs of the new system.

Among the first of these was the little text-book of Paul Bert, Gambetta's Minister of Public Instruction, entitled "L'Instruction Civique à l'Ecole," which was furnished gratuitously to its schools by the city of Paris, and adopted by Lyons, Bordeaux and Marseilles, and honored by a gold medal in 1882.

He says in his preface: "The proposition of law upon which I had the honor to make a report to the last Chamber, the 6th of December, 1879, and which has become the law of the State (28th March, 1882), declares in its article third, that 'the instruction in the primary schools includes *l'instruction morale et civique*.'

"To the *instruction morale* is joined in the primary school the *instruction civique*, which is also an innovation, that timorous spirits consider as revolutionary, . . . and that is nearly equal in importance to the first."

Although by common report Paul Bert is an atheist, he recognizes the necessity of moral education, not only in the law of 1882, of which he was the author, but also in his treatise and text-book.

Soon after this appeared "Devoirs et Droits de l'Homme," by Henri Marion, Professor of Philosophy in the Lycée Henri IV., and which was adopted by the Minister of Public Instruction as a classic, and apparently intended for secondary schools. It is a comprehensive survey of all the duties and rights of man, and treats of practical morality very fully.

Later still, in 1884, appeared the "Notions d'Education Civique," of Mme. Henriette Massy, in four parts: "Civic Instruction," "Elements of Usual Rights," "Political Economy," and "Morals," the latter subject occupying forty of the two hundred pages of the text-book.

Mme. Henri Gréville has also added to the list a text-book for young girls, entitled "Instruction Morale et Civique."

I cannot complete the list, and will mention but two others: "L'Instruction Morale à l'Ecole (cours moyen et supérieur) à l'usage des deux sexes," of M. Burdeau, and the "Eléments d'Instruction Morale et Civique," by Gabriel Compayré, a deputy. I have spoken thus fully of these books, because the question is frequently asked by instructors, How is it possible to teach morals by a text-book? I suggest to such inquirers and doubters an examination of these books, especially that of Henri Marion, for a complete answer to that question.

The French law of 1880 provided for the establishment of institutions for the secondary education of girls, to be founded by the State. The first article in the curriculum is "Morals." It is also provided by law that religious instruction shall be given, out of school-hours, at the request of parents, by different ministers appointed by the Minister of Public Instruction.

It is, I think, now apparent that we are behind Germany and France, not only in technical instruction, but in moral education; and to these two countries Austria and England can be added.

Among the objections to teaching morals in our public schools is the "sectarian" objection; we do not well see how it can be maintained, as it is not proposed nor is it in the least degree necessary to enter the domain of polemics, for the text-books should as in France carefully exclude controversial subjects, and may be so prepared as to be acceptable to all Christian denominations, as well as to Jews and pagans, if such there be.

The objection of the practical instructor, who now labors under the perplexities, annoyances, and the bewildering confusion of an absurdly unpractical curriculum, is more reasonable, but can be easily overcome by the substitution of a more practical system of public instruction, now imperatively demanded by our necessities.

I have purposely devoted the greater part of the space allowed to me to the foundation of all education, as it is the most neglected and the least considered in the schools of our State. Technical education holds the second place in the perfect curriculum. The conviction is growing and becoming firmly established, that technical education will give to the graduates of our public schools, in place of their present impotency, a readiness and aptitude in the use of their hands, and the consequent power of self-help; will greatly develop the faculty of observation, increase their knowledge of things and processes, create industrial habits, develop mechanical faculties, ennoble manual labor, and thus destroy or diminish a great factor in the increase of crime in our commonwealth. The result of this conviction is a greatly increased interest in the subject of technical instruction, experimental beginnings, and the multiplying of industrial or technical schools in every part of our land.

Mr. Wright, in a paper on the "Working-Girls of Boston," declares that "one great lack in the lower grades of industry is the want of a thorough training in technical knowledge, and of the capacity for close application." As to the ability of women to earn a maintenance, if properly instructed, he says, "There seems to be no limit to the industrial opportunities of women."

The impotent results of our systems of public instruction have called down the criticism of foreign observers.

In the report of the Royal Commissioners of Technical Instruction, Mr. Mather says: —

"The effect of the public schools, colleges and universities supported by taxation of the people, is more marked in the general education in the literary branches than in any special acquaintance with natural science, and in this direction their influence is not altogether a benefit. Too large a class of young people in America of both sexes are seeking pursuits not requiring manual labor. Their education, as given at present in the high schools and colleges, tends rather to

unfit them for the active industries of life, in a country where the vast resources of nature are waiting for willing and trained hands to utilize them" (p. 47).

The truth thus expressed obtains a singular but melancholy confirmation in the report of our own Prison Commissioners, who affirm that "*one half of the advantage of prison life to youthful convicts is the acquirement of the habit of industrious labor.*"

The increase in technical schools for both sexes abroad is remarkable; women's trade and professional schools are numerous in Germany, Belgium, Holland and Italy, as well as in other countries. Technical instruction there has long since ceased to be an experiment; it has been found to help the ordinary school instruction by illustration; to form the habit of thought, to plant ambition, develop ingenuity, and increase the integrity and dignity of the individual. For the state it has introduced and organized new industries, decreased juvenile crime, increased the number of "self-governing beings," and secured, prospectively, its permanent prosperity.

As the great problem before us is how to increase public morality, augment our working force, and decrease idleness, vagabondage and crime, it is worth while to bear in mind that all observers agree in the opinion, and such statistics as are accessible confirm it, that industrial education stops crime at its very source.

Mr. Buxton, chairman of the board of education in London, observes (1882): —

"Since 1870, 7566 children, and during the past three years 2231 children, have been sent to industrial schools. The convictions for juvenile crime are now only one half what they were in 1870."

Sufficient evidence has, perhaps, been produced to suggest the probability, if not to establish the fact, that the public indifference to moral education, and the neglect of industrial

and technical training in our public schools, are great factors in the increase of crime.

It is to be hoped that the rapidly forming public opinion in favor of industrial education which will soon demand recognition by the state, in spite of the opposition of school boards and town committees, will also include in its demand that the training in morals shall be no longer a "thing of doubts and guesses and only half admitted conclusions," but shall take the first and highest place in the school curriculum, which its practical importance and the public welfare peremptorily require.

GEORGE R. STETSON.

BOSTON.

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